

CHAPTER 7

Cards and Calls

Traditionally, naval officers were expected to pay formal social calls on their commanding officers when reporting to a new duty station. The new officer, accompanied by his/her spouse would visit the commanding officer's home for 15-20 minutes and leave calling cards.

Times have changed, however, and the trend is toward less formality in social settings. The formal exchange of social calls is generally not required today. It is far more common for a commanding officer to host large scale receptions to welcome newcomers and bid others farewell. An officer should always inquire as to the new command's policy.

Should formal calls be desired, the following general guidelines are observed. An appointment should be made, and the officer and spouse arrive promptly at the residence of the commanding officer. Usually a social call lasts 20 to 30 minutes, with light, pleasant conversational exchange. The appropriate number of cards is left on a silver dish or tray located on a table near the door. The officer paying the call leaves one of his cards for the husband and one for the wife, as well as one for each lady in the house over 18, not more than three cards being left by any one person. The civilian woman leaves one card for each lady of the house over 18, but never for a man, not even the President. A man can never make a call for his wife nor leave her cards, although she may make calls and leave cards for him, except in the case of a call on his commanding officer.

Exceptions to this recent trend are few, but often include officers on military and diplomatic assignment in foreign countries. These individuals often call on officials within their own embassy and military activity, on officials of the host government, and on diplomatic representatives of other governments. In these cases, it is best to check with the protocol officer of the U.S. embassy for guidance on local customs.

CALLING CARDS

Despite the fact that formal social calls are rarely made, calling cards are still useful in many situations. They are sent with flowers or gifts, as informal invitations to informal parties of any type, as reminders, or as bearers of messages of condolence or congratulations. Accordingly, a supply of envelopes that approximate the size of the card and yet conform to existing postal regulations is a wise investment.

It is a great help and often economically advantageous to patronize only the finest engravers. They generally know the correct use of titles and social forms and are qualified to advise concerning the type size, paper quality, and similar matters. Some are also willing to help the junior officer to economize by making three cards, namely the joint card, personal card, and the wife's card from a single plate. Many engravers will keep a plate on file and fill subsequent mail orders.

Calling cards need not be engraved. The more economical process of thermography that produces a raised print is a very acceptable substitute.

SELECTING CARDS

The following recommendations regarding personal cards and their use are founded on accepted social practice and naval tradition.

Neither abbreviations nor initials are generally allowed. Suffixes are the single exception to this rule. The suffix "Jr." may be used instead of the preferred "junior" if the officer so desires, or if his name is very long or preceded by a lengthy title. The Roman numerals II, III, and IV, which are used to identify a younger man who has the same name as an older living relative, also follow an officer's name on his card. A comma is always used between the surname and suffix.

Clarity rather than undue size or ornateness is desirable in the lettering. Script, shaded roman, and antique roman are among the most popular styles, offering the advantage of a distinguished and legible appearance.

PERSONAL CARDS

Officers

An officer's personal card is approximately 3-1/8 inches long and 1-5/8 inches high, although the length of the name and title will determine the exact dimensions.

Senior Flag Officers

A very senior officer is entitled to use his/her rank and surname on the cards, but many prefer to have the full name engraved to provide more complete identification

Admiral Smith

United States Navy

or

Admiral James Lytle Jones
United States Navy

Vice Chief of Naval Operations

Senior Officers

Titles of officers of the grade of commander and above should precede their names. The service designation of such senior officers may be directly below the line bearing the officer's name and rank, or in the lower right corner of the card.

Rear Admiral Elizabeth Eileen Flanner
United States Navy

or

Commander Brian Richard Leahy

United States Naval Reserve

Junior Officers

Titles of junior officers (warrant officer through lieutenant commander) are engraved in the lower right corner of the officer's card and centered above the service designation.

Timothy Daniel Ace, Junior

Ensign
United States Navy

or

Shawn Claire Smith

Lieutenant Junior Grade
United States Naval Reserve

Staff Corps Officers

Staff Corps designations properly appear before the service affiliation of the senior officer wherever he/she elects to locate the latter. For all others, it must appear in the lower right corner between the rank and the service designations.

Rear Admiral Thomas Francis Boeing
Supply Corps, United States Navy

or

Louis Gawain Foster, Jr.

Lieutenant Commander
Medical Corps
United States Naval Reserve

Midshipmen

Cards of midshipmen show their title and service in the lower right corner.

William Howard Hoover

Midshipman
United States Navy

or

Maureen Therese Connelley

Midshipman
United States Navy

Retired Officers

A retired officer's card is engraved exactly as that for an officer of comparable grade on active duty except that the word "Retired" is added on a separate line below the service affiliation. "Retired" should not be abbreviated, placed within brackets, or otherwise positioned on the card.

Captain Terence Arnole McGinnis

Judge Advocate General Corps
United States Navy
Retired

Naval Attachés

A two-ply glazed white card, measuring about 3-1/2 inches long and 2 inches high, is used for the official card of a naval attaché. Name, rank, and service are engraved on the first two lines in the manner appropriate to the rank of the officer concerned. Commanders and above show their grade and full name on one line, with staff corps (if any) and service on the second; while junior officers place their full name on the first line and their rank, corps if any, and service on the second. The third line reads "Naval Attaché," and in some cases a fourth line, "Naval Attaché for Air" is added when appropriate. These are followed by the line, "Embassy of the United States of America." The name of the capital of the country of accreditation is engraved in the lower right corner.

Special local requirements governing the number of cards for a given assignment, the foreign language cards, which may be needed, and other such details are established by the Department of State.

Senior Officer Naval Attaché:

Captain Howard Homer Skidmore
United States Navy
Assistant Naval Attaché
Assistant Naval Attaché for Air
Embassy of the United States of America

Copenhagen

Senior Officer, Staff Corps, Naval Attaché:

Commander Herman Kordenat Rendtorff
Dental Corps, United States Navy
Assistant Naval Attaché
Assistant Naval Attaché for Air
Embassy of the United States of America

Moscow

Junior Officer Naval Attaché:

Charles Wilkes Styer, Jr.
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy
Assistant Naval Attaché
Assistant Naval Attaché for Air
Embassy of the United States of America

Paris

Other Naval Personnel. Naval personnel below the rank of warrant officer use a card, which bears only their names in the center and the service designation at the lower right corner. "Mr.," "Miss," "Ms.," or "Mrs." is never appropriately used on the personal cards of military personnel.

Navy Department Civil Officials. The service Secretaries and Under Secretaries, although not members of the President's Cabinet, are allowed to use simply their titles on calling cards just as Cabinet members do.

The Secretary of the Navy

Or

The Under Secretary of the Navy

An Assistant Secretary's card carries his name and title since each executive and service department has more than one person with this position title.

Civilian Women. A married woman's card is squarer than a man's and is customarily about 3-1/8 inches long by 2-1/4 inches high. It is preferable that a wife's card matches her husband's in color, style, type of engraving, and indication of the name. Often, the home address is engraved in the lower right corner.

The wife of an official who uses only his title on his card has hers engraved with only the surname.

Mrs. Robert Louis Smythe

or

Mrs. Earle Peter Jones

24 Granby Street, Boston

or

Mrs. Laird

JOINT CARDS

Married couples sometimes use a joint or double card reading "Captain and Mrs. Jeffrey David Hart." The size approximates 2-1/2 inches by 3-1/2 inches. This card is particularly useful to send with gifts or flowers, or as informal invitations. When calling on a married couple, one such card may be left along with an additional card of the husband.

Although at one time only commanders and above used the joint card, it is now frequently and properly used by lieutenants and above.

It is sometimes advisable to engrave the address in the lower right corner of the double card. If a permanent address is uncertain, it may be omitted from the card plate and penciled on the cards as used. The officer's branch of service is never indicated on this card.

Rear Admiral and Mrs. John Paul Jones, II

2220 West Street

or

Lieutenant and Mrs. Mark G. Burgunder

or

Commanders John and Elizabeth Smith

The following standard abbreviations penciled in the lower left corner of visiting cards were at one time used to convey formal messages as indicated. They are occasionally used in very formal and diplomatic settings today.

"p.f." – pour feliciter – to congratulate, is used to extend felicitations on occasions such as national holidays or some special event. Cards so inscribed are generally mailed or delivered to arrive on the day being celebrated.

"p.c." – pour condoler – to condole, may replace the usual English expressions of sympathy on a card left personally or sent through the mail at times of bereavement.

"p.r." – pour remercier – to thank, is written on a card to be mailed to a person who has sent a card inscribed with "p.f." or "p.c."

"p.p.c." – pour prendre conge – to take leave, is used on a card by the individual who is departing from a station or community. If it is impossible to call in person, such cards may be sent by mail and should be left on all officials and all acquaintances by whom one has been entertained.

"p.p." – pour presenter – to present, is occasionally seen on a friend's card that has been sent with a stranger's card. This is intended to introduce the stranger. When such a card is received, one should immediately send cards or call on the person so introduced.

INFORMAL CARDS

It should be noted that so-called "informals" which are of two types, fold-over cards and single flat cards, are substitutes only for notepaper and are never to be used as visiting cards. The appearance and uses of informal cards are discussed in Chapter 2.